POLITICAL SCIENCE 230: BLACK POLITICAL THOUGHT

Marcus D. Pohlmann, Professor of Political Science
Office Hours: TuTh 2:00-5:00
or by appointment

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

In recent years, there has been a development of distinctive focus of study upon the historical experience, cultural values, and political/social behavior of the African-American population. This course is part of that development. It represents an effort to bring the rigors of social scientific analysis to bear on important political theories and strategies. Within this general approach, there are two primary objectives:

(1) To improve understanding of the political/social/economic circumstances of African Americans;

(2) To stimulate the student’s creative thought, clarity of expression and interest in political/social phenomena; but in particular, to help the student further the development of his/her own political philosophy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

READINGS: Most of the course will involve discussing the political philosophies of prominent African Americans. In the interim between discussions, students will be required to read from important books written by a number of these writers. Toward the end of the term we will read from a contemporary analytical text as we attempt to synthesize a political strategy appropriate for the present day.

CLASS CONTRIBUTION: Attend all classes and come prepared. Performance will be evaluated according to attendance and the preparation/insight demonstrated by students’ unsolicited contributions and answers when called on.

QUIZZES: There will be a short objective quiz at the outset of each class, allowing students to show their understanding of the primary chapters for that day’s discussion.

BOOK CRITIQUE: Alternately, different students will be assigned to read and critique the entire book (or set of readings) under discussion for a particular day.

MIDTERM EXAM: An essay exam (open books and open notes).

FINAL EXAM: A comprehensive essay question which will require the student to synthesize, analyze, and propose (open books and open notes).
GRADING

Best 12 (of 14) Quizzes* 30%
Class Participation 10%
Book Critique 10%
Midterm Exam 20%
Final Exam 30%
100%

*absences for any reason other than representing the college in an extracurricular involvement will be recorded as a “0.”

Course Rule #1: Looking at previous years’ quizzes, papers or essays is not allowed and will be viewed as a serious violation of the Honor Code. When you pledge your exams, you will be pledging in part that you have not seen any such materials. The one exception are the samples I have placed on closed reserve.

Course Rule #2: Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. In addition, Wikipedia, blogs and other non-refereed sources should be cited if used, but they are not considered to be authoritative references sources.

Course Rule #3: You may take exams early but not late. Call me ahead of the exam if you will miss it due to illness (or any other emergency)! Otherwise, NO MAKE-UP EXAMS! Also, there are NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES under any circumstances.

REQUIRED READING:

“Diversity” readings (Moodle)
Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery
W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folks
Amy Jacques-Garvey, Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey
Martin Luther King, Jr. readings (Moodle)
Black Muslims readings (Moodle)
George Breitman, ed., Malcolm X Speaks
Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power
Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Ice
Angela Davis, An Autobiography
Thomas Sowell, Black Rednecks and White Liberals
Manning Marable, How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America
Marcus Pohlmann, Black Politics in Conservative America
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 9</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td>Race Relations</td>
<td>“Diversity” readings (Moodle); Pohlmann, Black Politics in Conservative Am., chaps. 1-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>Booker T. Washington</td>
<td>Up From Slavery, esp. chaps. 5, 14, and 17</td>
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<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>W.E.B. DuBois</td>
<td>Souls of Black Folks, esp. chaps. 1, 3, 6, 8-10</td>
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<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>Marcus Garvey</td>
<td>Phil. and Opinions, esp. vol. I and vol. II – pt. I</td>
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<td>Feb. 13</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr.</td>
<td>King READINGS (Moodle)</td>
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<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td>The Black Muslims</td>
<td>Muslims readings (Moodle)</td>
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<td>Feb. 27</td>
<td><strong>MIDTERM EXAM</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 12</td>
<td>Malcolm X</td>
<td>Malcolm X Speaks, esp. chs. 1-6, 10-11, 14-15</td>
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<td>Mar. 19</td>
<td>Ture &amp; Hamilton</td>
<td>Black Power, esp. chaps. 1-3, 7-8</td>
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<td>Mar. 26</td>
<td>Eldridge Cleaver</td>
<td>Soul on Ice, esp. parts 1, 2, and 4</td>
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<td>Apr. 2</td>
<td>Angela Davis</td>
<td>Autobiography, esp. chaps. 2, 3, and 4</td>
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<td>Apr. 9</td>
<td>Thomas Sowell</td>
<td>Black Rednecks and White Liberals, esp. chaps. 1, 3, and 6</td>
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<td>Apr. 16</td>
<td>Manning Marable</td>
<td>How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America, esp. chaps. 1-2, 5, 9-10</td>
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<td>Apr. 23</td>
<td>Marcus Pohlmann</td>
<td>Black Politics in Conservative America, chaps. 6-10</td>
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**Friday, May 3 (1:00 pm)**  **FINAL EXAM**
BOOK CRITIQUE

Your critique should be roughly 3-5 typewritten pages, including:

(a) Does he/she advocate violent and/or nonviolent forms of political participation? Cite evidence.

(b) Does he/she prefer the development of an integrated or segregated social milieu? Cite evidence.

(c) Does he/she prefer a capitalistic or socialist economic form? Cite evidence.

(d) What is one important argument the author makes that you find particularly convincing? Explain why, e.g., add additional evidence and/or defend it against obvious counter-arguments.

(e) What is one important argument the author makes that you disagree with? Explain and defend your counter-position.

This should be done in 5 separate sections, using properly cited quotes from the text to support your points where appropriate.

[Late papers will be down-graded severely. No excuses!]

DUE DATES (2-3 students per book)

Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery (January 23)
W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folks (January 30)
Amy Jacques-Garvey, Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey (February 6)
Martin Luther King, Jr. readings (February 13)
Black Muslims readings (February 20)
George Breitman, ed., Malcolm X Speaks (March 12)
Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power (March 19)
Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Ice (March 26)
Angela Davis, An Autobiography (April 2)
Thomas Sowell, Black Rednecks and White Liberals (April 9)
Manning Marable, How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America (April 16)